

JORDAN TIMES

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورن تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية «الراي»

AMMAN, THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 1978 — JAMADI AWAL 4, 1398

U.S. will stand by NATO

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — The U.S. Defence Department, in an unusual move, today made public portions of a secret document saying that it did not plan abandoning the southern and northern flanks of NATO. A few lines from the Pentagon's voluminous guidance to the military services for planning the 1980 defence budget were released as Defence Secretary Harold Brown left for a nine-day trip to Europe to consult with NATO allies. "We do not advocate abandoning the flanks of NATO... we would not propose to abandon the Mediterranean," Mr. Brown said in the budget guideline document.

Price: Jordan 50 fils; Syria 60 piastres; Lebanon 75 piastres; Saudi Arabia 1 riyal; UAE 1 dirham; Great Britain 25 pence.

Caldwell to try for Cyprus peace

ATHENS, April 12 (R). — U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim said today he might launch a fresh Cyprus initiative after receiving new Turkish-Cypriot proposals here tomorrow on the future of the divided island. Mr. Waldheim told reporters on arrival from London he would not decide on a special trip to Cyprus until he had a chance to study the Turkish proposals. But asked about a weekend flight to the island for consultations with a Greek and Greek-Cypriot leaders, Mr. Waldheim replied: "It is possible, it is not excluded."

Volume 3, Number 727

Ceausescu warns of peace menace

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — President Nicolae Ceausescu of Romania, who has steered a dependent course between East and West, told President Carter today that the world "threatening clouds menace peace." The Romanian leader was speaking at an official arrival ceremony during which President Carter said the bonds between the United States and Romania were more important than their ideological differences and membership of opposing military alliances. Mr. Ceausescu, whose country's human rights record has been criticised by the Carter administration, said the Helsinki agreements on European security and cooperation had made no significant progress in improving West relations. He welcomed the Romanian President's arrival in Washington, saying it was a status which the U.S. government had to apply to the city. He used the term in saying recent notable achievements.

Soviets claim diplomat held by U.S. intelligence

UNITED NATIONS, April 12 (R). — The Soviet Mission to the United Nations charged yesterday that Arkady N. Shevchenko, absent top-ranking member of the U.N. Secretariat, was being held "in duress" by U.S. intelligence services in a "detestable frameup." Shevchenko's New York Lawyer, Ernest A. Gross, noted that his U.N. employment contract had two years to go and contended that for the United Nations to fire him out of hand just on Soviet request would violate the U.N. charter. U.S. denies charge. WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — The U.S. government today denied Soviet charges that it was holding Soviet U.N. diplomat Arkady Shevchenko against his will. "He is free to stay, return to the Soviet Union or go to another country as he wishes," state department spokesman Tom Reston said.



Israeli troops in Occupied Lebanon stop civilian trucks bearing Lebanese refugees back to their war shattered villages in south Lebanon on Wednesday. The refugees were allowed to proceed after their identity papers were checked. (AP wirephoto)

New Soviet weapons captured by Israelis in S. Lebanon invasion

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM, April 12 (Agencies). — As Israeli troops settled into new positions in southern Lebanon Wednesday, Prime Minister Menachem Begin called the month-long occupation a qualified military and political success. Begin said the establishment of a peacekeeping force on Israel's northern border, long harassed by infiltrations and rocket attacks, was a political achievement. But he said the long-range effectiveness of that arrangement was still in doubt. Critics have accused the government of overreacting to the terrorist assault outside Tel Aviv on March 11 which cost 35 Israeli lives, Lebanese reports say over 2,000 civilians were killed in Israeli air strikes and artillery bombardments. The critics also say the Israeli action did not hinder the Palestinians' capability to harass Israeli border settlements with artillery and rocket fire from their new positions. Defence officials declined to confirm or deny a report in the English language Jerusalem Post saying that an estimated 280 civilians died in the south Lebanon fighting. Weapons captured. Israeli spokesmen have declined to give estimates of the civilian death toll. The Post report, attributed to authoritative but unofficial sources, said Israelis had so far buried about 180 civilian victims of the conflict. An estimated 100 more civilians had been buried by the

Syrian guns pound Beirut area to quell rightists

BEIRUT, April 12 (R). — Arab peace keeping forces today bombarded Beirut's Christian suburb of Ain Rummaneh where rightists have been fighting leftists in the neighbouring Moslem district of Shiyah for four days. The tank and rocket assault by the Syrian-dominated force killed 25 people in Ain Rummaneh and wounded 60, according to right-wing estimates. The sources said 12 Syrians were killed but there was no official confirmation of the casualty toll.

Lebanese Interior Minister Salah Salameh told reporters that fighting today was exclusively between peace force troops and rightist militiamen. But rightwing combatants said they also clashed with leftists in Shiyah. Syria threw tanks and "Stalin organ" rocket batteries into battle to restore peace between the districts where four days of fighting killed at least 15 and wounded 75. After furious morning exchanges between leftists in Shiyah and rightists in Ain Rummaneh, fighting subsided when Syrian troops in the hills overlooking the combat zone pounded targets below with Katyusha rockets. Tanks guns of the Syrian-dominated Arab League peace force, which is policing the Lebanese civil war truce, also went into action. Most of the peace force fire was concentrated on targets in Christian Ain Rummaneh.

Anniversary

The fighting raged on the eve of the third anniversary of an incident in Ain Rummaneh which sparked the 1975-76 civil war, which left an estimated 60,000 dead but failed to solve the country's problems. Rightwing military leaders blamed the latest fighting on the Palestinians and described

the situation as a replay of the 1975 events which triggered the war. As the rightwing voice of Lebanon radio station broadcast urgent appeals for blood donors, the military leaders of the two major rightwing parties called a news conference to say that Palestinians bore sole responsibility for the latest bloodshed. Bashir Gemayel, military chief of his father's Phalangist Party, and Dany Chamoun of former President Camille Chamoun's National Liberal Party (NLP) vigorously denied that the fighting between the rival districts had any sectarian connotations. "What is happening now is very similar to what happened in 1975," Mr. Chamoun told the news conference. "The people behind the issue are the same as three years ago -- the Palestinians."

On April 13, 1975, rightist militiamen in Ain Rummaneh ambushed a bus carrying Palestinians, killing 27 of them. The attack resulted in steadily escalating rounds of fighting between rightists and forces of Lebanon's alliance of Palestinian commandos and leftists.

Palestinians must "behave"

In what was interpreted as a statement falling just short of a declaration of war on the

Palestinians in Lebanon, Mr. Chamoun declared that they "must pack up their arms and behave as decent citizens." Officials of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) have denied Palestinian involvement in the latest fighting. There has been no eyewitness confirmation of significant Palestinian front-line participation.

Franjeh afraid

Syrians may pull out. BEIRUT, April 12 (AP). — Lebanese parliament member Tony Franjeh indicated the government of Syrian President Hafez Assad was "disgusted" and "feeling to have been stabbed in the back" by Lebanon's Christian militia leaders. "I reported this Syrian attitude to President Sarkis and other Christian leaders said Franjeh, son of former Christian President Suleiman Franjeh, after returning from Damascus Tuesday night. The Syrians intervened in Lebanon at the former president's request in 1976. "I am afraid this disgust may lead the Syrian leadership to decide to withdraw its forces from Lebanon," Franjeh said.

of a high-powered sniper rifle. Earlier, as Ain Rummaneh still shook to the explosion of rockets, a young rightist militiaman angrily shouted at an old man shuffling along a deserted road, seemingly oblivious of the danger. "What the devil are you doing here?" he barked. "Go home, take cover, this isn't a television play." Though the fighting was restricted to two districts, most schools in predominantly Christian eastern Beirut closed in the morning. In Ain Rummaneh, civilians huddled in basements as protection against shrapnel. Fears of renewed fighting despite Syria's intervention were fuelled when the radio station of the Phalangist Party began broadcasting martial music -- for the first time since the end of the war.

Israeli soldier killed in south Lebanon clash

TEL AVIV, March 12 (R). — An Israeli soldier was killed in a clash with a Palestinian guerrilla group in the west sector of south Lebanon, the military command said here today. It identified the soldier as a 26-year-old corporal but gave no further details about the incident. Earlier yesterday three Israeli soldiers were killed and another seriously wounded in another Lebanon when their military vehicle, which they were driving without authorisation, overturned. Seven Israeli were ambushed by Palestinian guerrillas while on a joy ride in south Lebanon last week. Two managed to get back to Israel but five are missing behind Palestinian lines, and are believed dead. In Beirut a Palestinian commando organisation today claimed responsibility for last night's explosion in Jerusalem and said more than five Israelis were killed or wounded in the blast. The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) said in a statement that one of its commando units planted explosive charges near the Jaffa gate of Old Jerusalem. It said the explosion caused heavy damage. Last night Jerusalem police said a small explosive charge went off in the area, causing no casualties.

Syria accuses Israel of using atomic device

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP). — Syria accused Israel today of "seriously escalating the Middle East conflict" by planting a booby trap device on Syrian territory that exploded and emitted lethal "radioactive particles." An official government statement said the device, exploded April 1 near the Damascus-Jordan highway, killing 12 persons. It said Syria complained to the United Nations. It charged Israel with a "barbaric and savage violation of international rules forbidding the use of atomic force in civilian territory." The Syrians did not suggest the device was actually an atomic bomb. They said it was a device planted inside a radio receiver, that emitted radioactive particles from atomic cells made in the United States. The statement said that "Israel bears all the consequences resulting from this new and dangerous development."

Alia leads Arab airlines in promoting joint operations on long distance routes

By John Bonar
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, April 11 (JT). — Chairman of Alia, the Jordanian Airlines, he said the Government of Jordan should underwrite losses incurred by the national carrier operating uneconomical flights to Aqaba and Haifa. Speaking in an exclusive interview with the Jordan Times last weekend, Mr. Ali Ghandour said but for the losses on these routes, the airline's profits would have been over JD 500,000 instead of over JD 200,000 in 1977. These losses are a price we pay to promote tourism in our country, said Mr. Ghandour. "But it is not a price we should bear alone. I believe the Government should cover our losses on these domestic routes in return for the tremendous benefits Jordan receives from Alia through the air contribution to the country's balance of payments, foreign exchange position, according to Mr. Ghandour. Contributions in cash and in kind which Alia makes to the country's economy and social life through the company's financial "gladly pays" and is no way a burden to us without which profits would be as high as JD 3 million.



Mr. Ali Ghandour, Chairman of Alia, looks over a Learjet executive aircraft of Alia's affiliate Arab Wings, at Amman airport. (JT photo)

colours, but would be marketed under one consortium name, such as "Arab Air America." Mr. Ghandour said the airlines which have agreed to form the consortium are Saudi, Gulf Air, Middle East Airlines and Kuwait Airways in addition to Alia and Syrian Arab Airlines, which are already operating a twice weekly joint flight to New York from Amman. Alia has taken a lead in promoting cooperation among regional airlines. The joint flight operated by Alia on behalf of themselves and Syrian Airlines is the first such joint operation in the Middle East. Alia will shortly be introducing a similar joint service with Gulf Air to operate between Amman and various Gulf destinations and within the Gulf. This is in addition to the joint service now being promoted by Alia, Gulf Air, MEA and Cyprus Airways for flights from the Gulf to Amman, Beirut and Larnaca. Flights to south America. After a recent visit by Mr. Ghandour to West Africa, the legal formalities have been completed for the inauguration of flights from Amman to South America, via West Africa. It is planned to operate two weekly flights. One will be Amman-Lagos-Abidjan - Rio de Janeiro and the other Amman-Kano-Dakar - Rio de Janeiro. Agreements with Brazil, Senegal and Nigeria had already been concluded, but administrative problems prevented the finalising of an air transport accord with the Ivory Coast which has no diplomatic representation in Jordan. After Mr. Ghandour's talks with Mr. Koffi, the Chairman and President of Air Afrique and Mr. Savane Vassiriki, the Director of Civil Aviation, the Ivory Coast has granted Alia a temporary permit to operate through the country pending the signing of a full agreement by the civil aviation departments of Jordan and the Ivory Coast. Mr. Ghandour said that Alia is offering to share this route with other Arab airlines on the same basis as the New York flights are shared with Syrian Arab Airlines. "Sound reasons" for shelving Arab Air University. Plans for an Arab Air University have not been shelved, asserted Mr. Ghandour, who added, "there were sound reasons" for the recent setback in the size and staff of the Royal Academy of Aeronautics. The decision to strip the ac-

ademy of all responsibility for training military pilots for Jordan and other Arab airforces was prompted by two considerations according to the Alia chairman. First, the Jordan Air Force felt that although the pilots they were receiving from the academy had first class flying qualifications, they lacked "the real military discipline" which they expect air force personnel to have. Another, and perhaps even more important consideration, was that in discussions over the last year with international civil aviation bodies about assistance that would be forthcoming for the academy if it expanded into a pan-Arab centre, it was made "very clear" that no such help would be extended so long as the academy had responsibility for training and military personnel. With this in mind it was decided to reappraise the immediate priorities for the academy. When the separation of civilian and military pilot training took place, several instructors and the academy's fleet of Scottish Aviation bulldozers were transferred to the Royal Jordanian Air Force. The contract to train Bahraini Air Force pilots was also terminated and plans to build up the academy's student body through contracts with other Arab air forces were cancelled.

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Nkomo says Owen, Vance will join Rhodesia talks in Dar Es Salaam

LUSAKA, Zambia, April 12 (AP). — Joshua Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front guerrilla alliance, left today for Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, where he and Maputo-based leader, Robert Mugabe will take part in Anglo-American sponsored talks on Rhodesia during the upcoming weekend. Speaking in an interview before his departure, Nkomo said, "we are going to Dar Es Salaam to resume the adjourned Malta talks on Rhodesia." He confirmed that the Dar Es Salaam talks on Rhodesia

Syrian press demands sanctions to force Israel to withdraw

DAMASCUS, April 12 (R). — The semi-official Syrian newspaper Al Thawra charged today that Israel was misleading the world community over its withdrawal from south Lebanon, and called for the application of sanctions against it. "Israel is stalling and claiming partial withdrawal in two stages in order to cover up its military preparations to some parts of south Lebanon to remain there for a long time," the paper said. It added that the U.N. Security Council should apply firm sanctions against Israel if it failed to withdraw fully from Lebanese territory.

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Mr Begin's disaster

The Israelis usually do not waste any opportunity to tell the world about their peaceful intentions and their good behaviour, and their withdrawal from south Lebanon normally would be such an opportunity to be squeezed for its maximum propaganda value. Indeed, in normal times, the assorted Zionist groups in the United States would organise special dinners, at \$1,000 a plate, to commemorate the Israeli withdrawal from the south Lebanese territory invaded one month ago. But these are not normal times, and the Israeli withdrawal that has been slowly initiated this week will not be trumpeted so loudly, because it is glaring testament to the failure of everything that Israel has ever stood for in the past.

Prime Minister Begin ordered the invasion and occupation of south Lebanon with the aim of cutting down the Palestinian resistance fighting forces, and he said that Israel would withdraw only when the U.N. peace-keeping troops neutralised the Palestinians and guaranteed Israel security. Well, now the Israelis are withdrawing and leaving the south of Lebanon in the same vacuum that it has been in for the past several years, with neither the U.N. troops nor the Lebanese themselves having full control in the region. In other words, Premier Begin has had to eat his words.

The Israeli invasion of south Lebanon has been rightly perceived by the Israeli leaders for exactly what it is -- a disaster, and totally unrelated to guaranteeing Israel's security in the north. The instinctive, reflexive Israeli resort to the gun has proved inappropriate and ineffective once again.

ARAB PRESS COMMENTARY

On the question of Israel's withdrawal from south Lebanon Al Rai says that Israel Tuesday began to carry out the first stage of "the comedy of its alleged withdrawal from south Lebanon at a time when the United Nations secretary general, Lebanon and other concerned quarters have expressed dissatisfaction over this token pullback which will hardly include, in its two stages, one fifth of the occupied Lebanese territory."

The newspaper questions the effectiveness of U.N. Resolution 425 which calls on Israel for a complete and immediate withdrawal from south Lebanon, and the world organisation's inability to deploy up to 4,000 U.N. troops in the area.

Al Rai is apprehensive that by not completely implementing resolution 425, Israel intends to link up the occupied Lebanese area with the rest of the Arab territories occupied since 1967, and to postpone the whole question of withdrawal until after a comprehensive settlement is reached in the Middle East...

The newspaper puts the blame squarely on the Arab countries for allowing such partial arrangements which always "work in Israel's favour and provide it with broad security belts at the expense of Arab land."

Taking the same view, Tariq Al Masarweh, writing in Al Dustour, deplures Arab indecision and failure to confront Israel's expansion during the past 30 years. What Israel calls its security defence line in Lebanon has been created by its invasion of the south, in addition to its "security belts" already marked in Sinai, the Golan Heights and the West Bank, the writer says.

Almost driven to extinction by hunters, the Arabian oryx makes a comeback to Jordan



Side view of the Arabian oryx gives the illusion of a one-horned animal, which has perhaps given rise to the legend of the unicorn.

Text and photos
By Ginette Devaney
Special to the Jordan Times

Following the arrival in February of four male Arabian oryx leucoryx, the first of these extremely rare animals, formally indigenous to Jordan, to live here for nearly forty years, I visited the Shaumari Reserve of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN). This 22 square km. site lies near Azraq some 100 kms. east of Amman. There I spoke to Mr. John Clarke, the project leader who showed me around and to Mr. Larry Schiffer, the keeper from the Wild Animal Park in San Diego, California who arrived with the oryx on Feb. 17.

Mr. Clarke, an Englishman, is a zoologist by profession but before coming to Jordan with his wife, two and a half years ago, he had spent the previous 19 years involved with game reserves in Africa: six of those years being spent as Director of Parks in Zambia.

Emoloved by the World Wildlife Fund in co-operation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature based in Morrees near Geneva, Switzerland, Mr. Clarke not only runs the reserve and is in sole charge of all aspects of animal care and welfare including future breeding plans, but he is also involved with the planning and setting up of a system of nature reserves throughout Jordan and the drafting of a wildlife law. He has completed the first phase project, that of compiling a management plan for the reserves and this has now been submitted to the RSPN for further consideration.

The Shaumari Reserve

The Shaumari Reserve was set up as an agricultural experimental station in 1958 under

the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture in order to work on the problems of farming and irrigation in dry lands. The programme was abandoned in 1964 due mainly to insufficient quantities of water of the required standard -- the local water is brackish, containing too much salt for farming use.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Nature became interested in the site as it had always planned to set up a reserve for the conservation of endangered species and to revive locally extinct animals, and so in 1967 they acquired the lease on Shaumari. In 1971 the World Wildlife Fund were asked to assist in the plans for the reserve and Mr. Clarke was appointed as project leader.

It is hoped to bring back such local species as equus hemionus, the wild ass; the three gazelle species -- gazella gazella, gazella dorcas and gazella subgutturosa, which until the 1950s roamed in large herds in this country. It is also planned to bring back struthio camelus, the Syrian sub-species of ostrich found in Jordan until some years ago.

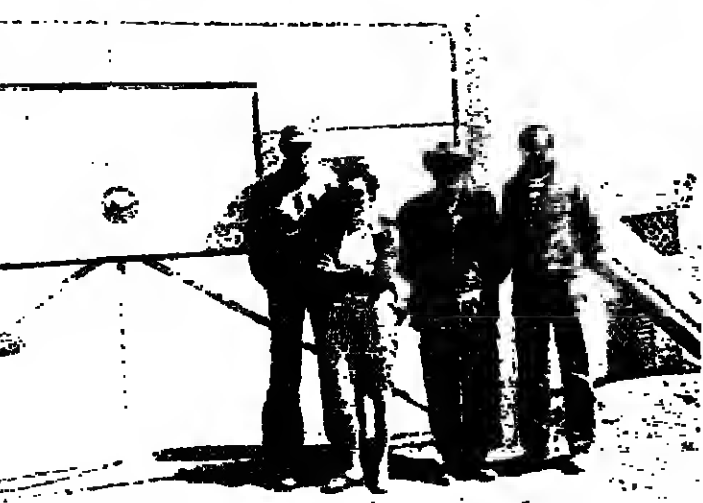
Long term future plans include the re-introduction of wolves and cheetah, although much work and a few years of successful establishment are required before these animals can again live in Jordan. Prey animals must be well settled and permanent before such carnivores can survive. Nature's own cycle of survival of predator and prey must be adhered to with animals interacting with one another, yet fitting into their chosen habitat.

The beginnings of a herd

The four Arabian oryx now living at Shaumari were a gift to Jordan from the Board of Trustees of the World Herd of



Standing beside crates holding the precious oryx, Larry Schiffer, Master Keeper of the San Diego Wild Animal Park of California, U.S.A., is bid bon voyage by Karen Merkert of the Customer Service Department of Alia, at New York City's Kennedy Airport on Feb. 16.



Larry Schiffer (from right to left) poses with Mr. J. Clarke, Mrs. Clarke and a local foreman outside the "animal holding unit."

For translation, commercial correspondence and private lessons in both Arabic and English.

Please call
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This is the first in a two-part series on the preservation of wildlife in Jordan.



A male Arabian oryx, with protective plastic tubes on the tips of his horns, paces the ground in his new home.

The Arabian Oryx. This board is made up of various bodies including the Fauna Preservation Society, the World Wildlife Fund, the Zoological Society of London, the Arizona Zoological Society and the Shikar Safari Club, the last two societies from the United States. These bodies hold occasional conferences, the last was held in Portugal on Feb. 13. It is hoped that a future conference may be held in Jordan.

To save the rapidly diminishing Arabian oryx from extinction, in 1963 the nucleus of a herd was formed; an expedition was mounted and three were caught in the wild in one of the last known homes of the wild oryx, namely the Sultanate of Oman. Six animals were donated by sponsors, from captive herds -- one from the Emir of Kuwait, four from the King of Saudi Arabia and one from the London Zoo.

During their first year these animals were sent to a reserve in Kenya set up by the World Wildlife Fund and the Fauna Preservation Society, and a search for a permanent home was made. It was important that climatic conditions were as near as possible to their original habitat. Eventually they were sent to Phoenix, Arizona where they flourished -- so much so that the herd, now numbering seventy head, was dispersed to San Diego and to Brownsville, Texas.

Jordan's four animals are from the San Diego Reserve.

Hopefully, this year, four females will be donated by the World Herd Trustees but enquiries will also be addressed to other Gulf states for animals from their captive herds. It is estimated that there are between 100 and 150 Arabian oryx in the world today. Mr. Clarke told me that when the number reaches about 1000 the species can then be said to have been saved from extinction.

Legend of the unicorn

The Arabian oryx is about one metre tall at the shoulder, with a small deer-like head and two very long, thin, knurled horns growing out of the forehead. The body is a soft, honey beige colour, while the legs, tail and head are a dark brown.

The horns of the oryx -- as seen at a certain angle from the side -- have supposedly given rise to the growth of the legend of the unicorn, a fabulous, single-horned animal with a horse-like body, gifted with magical powers. In heraldry it is often represented with a goat's beard and a lion's tail, thus giving it the virtues of bravery, beauty, wisdom and humility. In the Middle Ages, in the Western World, the unicorn was a symbol of virginity.

Much has been written about the near extinction of oryx leucoryx and indiscriminate hunting by local people



One of the recently arrived oryx in his pen.

has been given as the main reason for its decline. This however is not the whole picture -- environmental and other factors have contributed to the problems of the oryx. Several dry seasons one after the other caused many to die of thirst and starvation. In the 1950s and 1960s there were many locust plagues in Saudi Arabia and a campaign was launched to eradicate them. Poisoned hay was laid down to try to kill them off before they reached Jordan. Of course, it was not only locusts that ate the contaminated food -- many wild animals, including the oryx, died as a result of this campaign.

As a result of these three factors, hunting, lack of adequate food due to drought and the misguided use of poison, the oryx certainly became extinct in Jordan, and as none have been seen in the wild since 1970 in other parts of Arabia, it can be assumed that this animal no longer exists as a truly wild Arabian species. Its only hope is in such places as the Shaumari Reserve and dedicated people like Mr. Clarke and his staff, to preserve them.

The food for the animals is grown locally -- last year the reserve produced its own alfalfa, but it has now been decided to buy from local farmers as this is more economical. Concentrates are also fed but a problem has arisen as the hard, pelleted form of feed that the animals are used to is not available in Jordan, there is only loose powdery bran-like feed which they dislike because of the dust which gets in their eyes and noses as they eat. Perhaps some enterprising manufacturer here will

come to the rescue of Mr. Clarke and the oryx!

Sacred baboon

Another interesting animal on the reserve was given to Mr. Clarke by a private citizen who acquired it on a visit to Saudi Arabia. This is a papio hamadryas or sacred baboon -- the only primate common to the Arabian Peninsula -- found mainly in the forests of Yemen and of southern Saudi Arabia, also in the Horn of Africa and in one single instance, in Egypt. It is the animal revered by the ancient Egyptians and often depicted in their paintings and friezes. It has never been native to Jordan. This friendly, two-year-old male baboon will eventually become one of the first residents of the new Amman Zoo. Meanwhile he gives pleasure to the visitors of the Shaumari Reserve.

Any information required about the reserve and its visiting hours can be obtained from the offices of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature on the Fifth Circle, Amman.



Sacred baboon



A sacred baboon toys with his leash.

Economic and Business News

AMC pays first part of share in Potash Co.

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The Arab Potash Company has received the sum of JD 2,500,000 from the Arab Mining Company (AMC), a source at the potash company said today. The sum is the first instalment of the mining company's share in the Dead Sea potash project. AMC holds 25 per cent of the projects total capital.

Iran gives \$2m. loan to Marqa housing project

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — Director General of the Housing Corporation Hamdullah Al Nabulsi returned here today from a three-day official visit to Iran. During his stay he signed a \$2 million loan agreement with the Iranian Ministry of Economy under which the latter will finance the building of 300 housing units as part of the Marqa housing project. The Marqa housing project is part of a larger plan to develop the Amman northern area. As well as receiving help from the Jordanian government the project is also being partly financed by the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

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WHAT'S GOING ON

Art Exhibition

Paintings by Ibrahim Najjar Abul Rub are on display daily at the Goethe Institute till next Saturday.

Children's Books Exhibit

The third exhibition of children's books opens today at the King Hussein Club on Jabal Amman. The exhibition is on for one week until Friday 21st.

MEMORIAL SERVICE

A memorial service will

be held at the Greek

Orthodox Church, Abdalli

on Friday, 14th April, 1978

at 11:00 a.m. in memory

of the beloved:

Brigadier General

Khalil Tawfiq Qawar



Amman Water & Sewerage Authority (AWSA)

Prequalification date for Contracts
 1S & 5 WS

AWSA announces that the closing date for receiving the prequalification data for contracts 1S & 5WS (expansion of Sewage Collection & Water Laterals and house connections) which was fixed on April 30, 1978 has been extended to May, 15, 1978. Qualified Contractors will be advised by June 15, 1978 when they will be invited to submit bids.

General Manager
 Tahsin Sabbagh

Shell, Coastal States Gas Corp. to begin oil exploration in Syria

Pat McDonnell to the Jordan Times

SCUS, April 12 — Two oil-based petroleum companies have signed contracts with a Syrian government to begin an exploration operation in the coastal area.

The Shell Oil and Coastal States Gas Corporation, a joint venture of the Shell Oil Co. and the Coastal States Gas Corp., is led by L.W. (Roy) Stoner, a geologist with the American Oil Corporation, as project manager.

The initial survey period, which officially began March 15 and will tentatively continue through mid-1979, consists of geophysical — seismic, magnetic and gravity — surveys coupled with geological surveys.

"These surveys will lead up to drilling prospects in mid-1979 with two wild cat wells," Stoner said.

Headquarters for Pecten Syria Co. are in Damascus, housing a small technical and administrative staff. Five American specialists are conducting geophysical and geological surveys.

Will this concession create jobs for Syrians?

"We foresee 70 to 80 jobs opening under our geophysical contract," Stoner replied. "This should double to a total of 150 jobs in the fall when we add another crew. At the time we reach the wild cat drilling stage, another 30 to 40 jobs should open."

It may not be time to tell Syria to move over, but as geologist Stoner puts it:

"We're operating on more than a hunch, but we can't say we have definite prospects."

The second American operation, Syrian-American Oil Co., began its physical field operation April 1 within several hundred miles of potential oil producing land in the Deir Al Zor block.

"Surface indications are encouraging," stated Peteway. "Our sub-surface information came from old non-producing wells in the vicinity of the nearby Syrian Petroleum Co."

"Our seismic crew is carrying out a procedure of utilizing sound waves for indications of sub-surface structures. We'll continue this detail work to select the most promising areas to begin drilling in October."

"Preliminary indications are sufficient to support drilling two or three wild cat wells."

The initial two-year contract for exploration and test drilling was effective October 1977 and entailed two years of preliminary negotiations with the Syrian government.

The exploration and exploitation (development of surface equipment and pipe lines) phase will be followed with an optional 25-year production contract.

During its survey stage, the Syrian American Oil Corp. is operating with six American specialists: two geologists, two geophysicists, one manager, and one administrative and accounting assistant.

40,000 books will be on display at the Third Children's Book Exhibition opening today

At the King Hussein Club



This smart-looking poster can be seen displayed outside the King Hussein Club near First Circle, Jabat Amman announcing the Third Children's Book Exhibition.

By Breda Finegan Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN, April 12 (JT). — The Third Children's Book Exhibition opens at four o'clock Thursday afternoon at the King Hussein Club near the First Circle.

The exhibition, under the patronage of His Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Princess Sarvath, is organized by the Friends of the Children Club in cooperation with the Arab Centre for Research and Production, and will contain more than 40,000 books, Halim Goussous, a committee member of the Friends of the Children Club told the Jordan Times today.

"The aim of the exhibition," Mr. Goussous said "is to introduce children's books to the children of Jordan."

Thanks to the fact that all the books which came from Britain and the Arab World were transported free of charge by Alia, the Royal Jordanian Airline, the organization is able to offer the books at approximately 20 per cent less than most bookshops.

Not all the books on exhibit can be bought. Of the 40,000 on display, only about 30,000 are for sale. The rest are books donated by various embassies in Amman, and are to be included in the permanent library of the Friends of the Children Club.

"Most of the books," said Mr. Goussous, "are in English and Arabic, in fact I am 90 per cent sure that we have most of the children's books published in English and Arabic throughout the world."

The list of titles and publishers is certainly impressive. Among the books being carefully displayed today by a team of willing children under the guidance of Margo Matallian, another committee member, I noticed the popular Dr. Seuss beginner readers books like "Bears on Wheels" and "Fox in Socks," along with adventure stories by Enid Blyton and Catherine Cookson as well as encyclopedias such as the Macmillan "Our World Encyclopedia" containing 11 smart looking and compact volumes.

The exhibition is intended to cater for six to 16-year-olds. As well as displaying books, the club will be putting on a couple of plays which will be shown in an upstairs room and the children will also be able to watch films and cartoons every hour or so in a back room.

The exhibition will run from April 13 to 20 and will be open from about nine in the morning through to six in the evening. One piece of advice — go early if you want a good selection. Previous exhibitions have proved to be so popular late comers were often disappointed.

National News Roundup...

RSS to receive 1.5m. Swiss francs

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The technical assistance the Swiss government will provide for the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) under a new aid programme for the next two years, was discussed at today's meeting of the RSS between RSS Director General Dr. Albert, the Swiss Charge d'affaires in Amman and Director of the examinations and research centre in Gallen, Switzerland. During the meeting it was decided to allocate 1.5 million Swiss francs to supply the RSS with machines and equipment besides training of engineers in Swiss industrial and educational institutions. A number of Swiss experts will also be sent to help the society's technical departments. The Swiss government supplied the RSS with 2.7 million Swiss francs worth of machines and equipment under the former technical aid programme in addition to a number of scholarships.

Princess Basma tours Karak Governorate

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — Her Highness Princess Basma morning visited various villages and institutes in Karak Governorate to look into social services.

Financiers visit potash project

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — Participants in the Arab Company Financiers Conference today visited the potash project at the southern coast of the Red Sea.

Census to be conducted

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The Cabinet decided at its meeting today to conduct a census of inhabitants of the Kingdom next October to assist in future planning and charting of demographic trends. The census is the first comprehensive count of the population since 1961.

Cabinet approves Jordanian-Saudi information agreement

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — In its session today the Cabinet approved a Jordanian-Saudi information media agreement which was initiated during Minister of Information Adnan Abu Odeh's visit to Saudi Arabia early in January. The accord regulates and promotes the cooperation in the fields of journalism, information, bibliography and exchange of radio and television programmes.

Butter and powdered milk exempt from customs

AMMAN, April 12 (JT). — The Cabinet today decided to exempt butter and powdered milk from customs duties.

UNRWA to reduce aid to refugees

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The United Nations Relief Works Agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has decided to reduce its aid to refugees because of a deficit in the budget. The Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Refugees and Development, Abdul Rahim Jarrah, said UNRWA intends to make reductions in flour quotas for the coming months unless pledges for additional aid are forthcoming. UNRWA will further reduce its aid in education facilities. Mr. Jarrah pointed out that in past meetings host countries, including Jordan, refused to accept any cutbacks in UNRWA services. The deficit in the UNRWA budget is estimated at \$26.8 million.

Austrian tourist minister here for talks

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — The director of tourism in Vienna, Austria, discussed here today with Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Ghaleb Barakat cooperation in the field of tourism, particularly in training and education. The Austrian tourist expert also visited the ancient city of Jerash and the eastern shore of the Dead Sea where he looked at tourist projects being carried out. Earlier in the day he visited the Martyr's Memorial in the Hussein Medical Centre.

Alia leads Arab airlines in promoting joint operations on long distance routes

(Continued from page 1)

The immediate needs for the academy revolved around a demand for about 18 new pilots a year to cover the natural attrition and normal expansion of Alia and Arab Wings, the executive jet charter company based in Jordan.

"To have eighty employees for 18 students a year was out of the question," said Mr. Ghandour, who has been involved with aviation in Jordan since 1963 when Alia was founded. The academy now has 16 planes, four expatriate flying instructors, two Jordanian flying instructors, seven Jordanian assistant flying instructors and six ground school instructors, of whom five are expatriates.

A "temporary situation"

The academy has been completely absorbed administratively into the Alia Training Centre. But this is apparently only a "temporary situation". Mr. Ghandour says, "It is not true to say that Jordan is not ready for an Arab Air Academy. Jordan is more than ready but it must be planned properly and each step thoroughly thought out."

The future of the proposed Arab Air Academy should be clear by the end of the year, thinks Mr. Ghandour. By then the Arab Civil Aviation Council (part of the Arab League) will have met in November, and it is hoped that all Arab countries will join the five states who have already signed approval for the proposal to establish the academy in Amman.

"His Majesty King Hussein is sending a letter to every Arab head of state asking for support for the project," said Mr. Ghandour.

He stresses the desperate need for such an institution in the Arab World. For example, he says compellingly, in 1963 we formed Alia. Jordan had a long history of aviation. Since 1947 there had been three air

lines in the country before Royal Jordanian. Yet after 18 years of aviation experience in the country we could find only three local co-pilots, no technicians, no engineers and very few qualified sales and ticketing people. "The know-how and technology was not transferred in 18 years!"

The need still exists

Mr. Ghandour says that it was obvious the only way to get this know-how was to create our own technical schools. The flying club that started in 1965 as a result of this philosophy had Al Ghandour as one of its ground instructors and King Hussein as one of its first pupils. Although the King was already a qualified pilot, Mr. Ghandour says he enrolled and turned up for every lesson to set an example for the young people of the country.

"We sought to create a generation of Jordanians capable of working in aviation and reaching management level in technical fields, especially on the flying side."

That move has largely been successful as the majority of Alia flight crew and ground staff are now Jordanian.

will take place after international flights begin operating from the new Queen Alia Airport, now under construction at Zeeza.

Mr. Ghandour is a persuasive advocate for Amman as the base for such a university. He points out that Amman is already something of a centre for Arab aviation and that King Hussein's offer of the airport and its functioning facilities removes the cost in time and money of capital construction. In addition, he says, Jordan's weather is one of the best in the Arab World for flying training, permitting almost total year-round flying conditions.

Not least, concludes Mr. Ghandour, King Hussein is "the most aviation-minded head of state in the Arab World."

Should the Arab Air University be established in Amman it would set standards for Arab aviation and would serve as a model for the other satellite academies and flying schools that would still have to be established throughout the Arab World to meet the tremendous demand for skilled people in all fields of aviation.

Until the day that university is established, Mr. Ghandour says, the Board of Trustees of the Royal Jordanian Academy of Aeronautics, meeting under the chairmanship of Transport Minister Ali Suheimat, decided to turn over the management of the academy to Alia. According to Mr. Ghandour, this was largely a matter of economics. The academy received a government grant of around JD 60,000 per year but needed around four to five times this amount to cover costs. The "natural" source of additional finance, given the academy's current purely local role, was Alia.

However, says Mr. Ghandour, Alia sees its current responsibilities towards the academy as "preserving it and protecting it" for the future.



Arab mining official off to Somalia and N. Yemen

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — A senior official from the Arab Mining Company (AMC) Mr. Isam Khairi, leaves Amman next Saturday to visit Somalia and North Yemen, a source at the company said today. He will hold talks with officials in the two countries on possible participation by AMC in their mining projects.

Hannah Odeh to go to Kuwait meetings

AMMAN, April 12 (JNA). — President of the National Planning Council, Hanna Odeh and Deputy Governor of the Central Bank Hussein Al Qassem will be leaving for Kuwait soon to attend the annual meeting of the board of governors of the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development. The session is due to start on April 22 and will last for two days.

LOCAL EXCHANGE RATES

	Jordanian fil
Buying/Selling	306.00/308.00
U.S. dollar	576.00/580.00
W. German mark	152.50/153.40
Swiss franc	165.40/166.40
French franc	67.30/67.70
Italian lire (for every 100)	36.00/36.20
Japanese yen (for every 100)	139.80/140.60
Dutch guilder	142.70/143.60
Belgian franc (for every ten)	97.60/98.20
Swedish crown	67.00/67.40

Amman Stock Exchange Report

NAME OF COMPANY	PAR value	Volume traded	Opening price	Closing price
Jordan Petroleum Co.	JD 5,000	266	6,600	6,650
Jordan Cement Factories	JD 10,000	299	14,900	14,950
Jordan Phosphate Mines	JD 1,000	2,100	2,100	2,100
Arab Pharmaceutical Co.	JD 5,000	7,706	15,700	15,600
Housing Bank	JD 1,000	572	1,100	1,100
Petra Bank	JD 10,000	262	10,100	10,250
*Jordan - Gulf Bank	JD 1,100	3,030	1,100	1,100
*Dar Aldawa Development & Investment Co.	JD 1,100	2,692	1,650	1,700
General Mining Co.	JD 1,000	4,500	0,900	0,900
Jordan Electricity Co.	JD 1,000	625	1,250	1,250
Jordan Ceramic Industries	JD 1,000	63	0,950	0,900
Arab Bank	JD 10,000	2,750	51,000	55,000
Jordan Tobacco and Cigarette Co.	JD 5,000	352	7,400	7,500

Total volume traded, Wednesday, April 12 JD 25,217

*50 per cent of share capital paid.
*75 per cent of share capital paid.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE

JORDAN TELEVISION		BBC RADIO		AMMAN AIRPORT		USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS (Amman)							
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Carter hits at civil servants' wages in new anti-inflation campaign

WASHINGTON, April 12 (Agencies). — President Carter hit at the salaries of civil servants yesterday in a new anti-inflation campaign based on voluntary wage and price restraint. He said he would set an example for Americans by vetoing legislation that exceeded his budget or increased the federal deficit, by proposing a cut in a scheduled pay rise for government workers and by freezing the salaries of senior administration officials.

The president ruled out mandatory wage and price controls, saying he could not imagine any situation in which they could help except in a national emergency such as all-out war.

In a speech before the American Society of Newspaper Editors and at a followup news conference, Carter said he alone could not stem inflation.

"Let me be blunt about this point," he said. "I am asking American workers to follow the example of federal workers and accept a lower rate of wage increase."

Mr. Carter's prescription for combating inflation — running at an annual rate of 8.4 per cent so far this year — promptly drew fire from union leaders of the federal workers.

The president of the American Federation of Government Employees, said Mr. Carter had "failed the entire labour movement and America's workers because his programme is nothing more than a symbolic gesture against inflation."

Mr. Wurf, president of the

largest union of government workers, put it more bluntly. "It's sheer nonsense to take the first whack at inflation out of the hides of public workers," he said.

Union disapproval

The AFL-CIO's Public Employee Department threatened to withdraw its endorsement of Mr. Carter's proposed civil service reorganization, Fred Kroll, President of the Brotherhood of Railway and Airline Clerks, rejected the 5.5 per cent example and said he would look instead to the coal miners' three-year, 39 per cent wage settlement.

Mr. Carter's freeze on federal executive salaries, which range up to about \$56,000 a year, will affect only a little more than 2,000 of the government's 1.4 million civilian workers.

Mr. Carter's plan to restrict this year's federal pay increase to 5.5 per cent cannot be imposed. Either the House or Senate can reject his proposal in favour of retaining the 6.5 per cent pay boost that fed-

eral workers ordinarily could expect this fall.

The president's declaration opposing wage-price controls was hailed by the chairman of General Motors and other business executives.

Others were lukewarm about the rest of Carter's programme.

David Moffitt, a spokesman for Continental Oil Co., said "there was nothing new enough to inspire a reaction."

Japanese Prime Minister Takeo Fukuda today welcomed President Carter's speech which he said clarified the basic U.S. aim of curbing inflation and restricting oil imports.

In an interview with the publicly-owned National Broadcasting Corporation to be shown on television later today, Mr. Fukuda said he would urge President Carter to defend the dollar when they meet in Washington on May 3.

The dollar fell at one point to 218.15 yen on the Tokyo Foreign Exchange Market today, reflecting market disappointment at the president's speech which did not contain any significant measures to defend the dollar, dealers said. It later recovered to 218.50.

U.K. budget promises tax cut as polls near

LONDON, April 12 (AP). — Britain's Labour government has outlined a package of tax cuts aimed at stimulating the economy and improving labour's prospects in the next national election.

Mr. Denis Healey, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the House of Commons yesterday that the tax cuts would amount for virtually all of the £2.5 billion (\$4.75 billion) to be injected into the economy in the fiscal year that began on April 1.

The chancellor told reporters before delivering the address that it would provide "a little sunshine to brighten up the spring of Britain's economic recovery. Britain's economic fortunes have improved markedly over the past year with the increasing flow of North Sea oil. The balance of payments went into the black. Inflation edged below 10 per cent in January after reaching a peak of 26 per cent in September 1975. The pound is currently worth around \$1.87 compared to a record low of \$1.56 on Oct. 23, 1976.

But unemployment is running at 1.4 million, around 6 per cent of the workforce, and production is stagnant.

Tax cuts were widely expected as a means of pumping money into the economy, increasing demand and production and providing the incentives which the Labour government's critics say have been eroded under the welfare state.

"It is the first purpose of this budget to encourage a level of economic activity sufficient to get unemployment significantly down," Mr. Healey told the Commons and the nation.

It was the first budget speech broadcast live from the House of Commons. Daily Radio broadcasts of parliamentary proceedings began on April 3 and some law-makers referred to Mr. Healey's speech as the "Radio Budget."

There was no disputing that the British economy needs stimulating, but there was a widespread feeling that the chancellor did not go far enough.

Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Opposition Conservative Party, said Mr. Healey is a "late convert to tax cuts, and his conversion is only election deep."

There has been speculation that Prime Minister James Callaghan will call a national election in the autumn. If so, this would be Mr. Healey's last budget before an election. The tax cuts made possible by North Sea oil cannot help but sway some voters.

Britons are among the most highly taxed people in the world, with a basic tax rate of 34 per cent and a top rate of 63 per cent.

High taxes at the upper end of the scale have resulted in a new term in the British vernacular — the "Tax Exile". These are the top earners — pop stars, authors, athletes, professional people — who have fled Britain's shores to avoid what they consider punitive tax rates.

Bahrain's crude oil production increases

BAHRAIN, April 12 (R). —

Bahrain's crude oil production increased last year to an average of 59,182 barrels a day, reversing an earlier trend towards declining production from the island state's oilfields, according to figures released here today by the Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO).

BAPCO reported, however, a 13 per cent increase in natural gas production last year to a total of 332 million cubic feet.

Crude oil output in 1976 averaged 58,165 barrels a day and the production increase last year was attributed by a company spokesman to the extensive introduction of modern recovery techniques in Bahrain's oil fields where production started in 1932, the first on

the Arab side of the Gulf.

BAPCO (Bahrain Petroleum Company) is now 60 per cent owned by the government but officials here said recently an agreement had been reached on 100 per cent state control to be announced shortly.

The Bahrain refinery, which is owned exclusively by the American Caltex group, the foreign partner in BAPCO, increased throughput by 18 per cent to an average of 260,913 barrels a day, BAPCO said.

The refinery, one of the biggest in the Middle East, processes all the crude oil produced in Bahrain and receives the balance by pipeline from Saudi Arabia. Throughput in 1976 averaged 220,750 barrels a day. The company also reported

shipments of 271,163 barrels of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) last year, a 75 per cent increase on 1976.

Finland to increase

oil imports from Iraq

HELSINKI, April 12 (R). —

Finland's imports of crude oil from Iraq will rise to 600,000 tons this year under a newly signed agreement.

Imports were only 200,000 tons in 1976 but jumped to 400,000 last year.

The present deal was signed earlier this week in Baghdad, according to the state-owned Neste Importing and Distributing Company here.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL ROUNDUP

New York Yankees beaten again

NEW YORK, April 12 (AP).

The slugging Milwaukee Brewers continued their heavy hitting last night, getting two home runs from Gorman Thomas and one from Cecil Cooper in beating the New York Yankees 9-4.

The Brewers, 4-0, have hit nine home runs, scored 49 runs and collected 49 hits in their last start.

Cooper and Thomas homered off loser Catfish Hunter,

while Thomas' second two-run shot of the night and third home run of the season came off Rawly Eastwick.

A two-out single by Sal Bando and Thomas' first homer of the game gave the Brewers a 3-1 lead in the second inning, and Cooper's two-run double in the third chased Hunter.

In other American League games, home runs by Eric Soderholm, Jorge Orta, Ralph Garr and Ron Blomberg and three innings of one-hit relief pitching by Pablo Torrealba helped the Chicago White Sox to a 9-5 victory over the Toronto Blue Jays.

Milt May's three-run homer backed the six-hit pitching of Dave Rozema as the Detroit Tigers defeated the Texas Rangers 6-2.

In the National League, J.R. Richard allowed just two hits and Cesar Cedeno drove home the lone run as the Houston Astros beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 1-0.

Bobby Murcer drove in two runs and Rick Reuschel limited New York to four hits in seven innings, leading the Chicago Cubs to a 4-2 triumph over the California Angels.

over the Mets.

George Hendrick doubled home Dave Winfield in the ninth inning to give the San Diego Padres a 3-2 victory over the Atlanta Braves. The Padres pulled a triple play in the second inning when, with the bases loaded, Atlanta pitcher Phil Niekro hit a grounder to third baseman Bill Almon. He tagged the runner heading to third, threw to second for a forceout and the relay to first beat Niekro for the third out.

Jack Clark's eighth-inning homer off Dave Tomlin powered the San Francisco Giants to a 3-2 triumph over the Cincinnati Reds.

Montreal's game at Philadelphia was rained out.

Gary Alexander belted a two-run homer and Pete Broberg combined with relievers Bob Lacey and Elias Sosa as the Oakland A's beat the Seattle Mariners 2-0 and Roger Erickson pitched a seven-hitter and Mike Cuhbage and Roy Smalley homered to highlight a five-run fifth inning that powered the Minnesota Twins to an 8-1 victory over the California Angels.

Egypt, Romania sign electricity protocol

VIENNA, April 12 (R). — Egypt and Romania signed a protocol in Bucharest yesterday on cooperation in electricity production, the official Agerpres News Agency reported.

The agreement was signed by Romanian First Deputy Prime Minister Gheorghe Oprea and Egyptian Electric Power Minister Ahmad Sultan.

Mr. Sultan, who is on an official visit to Romania, had talks with President Ceausescu earlier yesterday.

The Egyptian minister also signed an agreement for the Romanian foreign trade company Romenergo to lay electricity lines in several rural areas of Egypt, Agerpres said. No further details were given.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES LONDON MARKET REPORT

LONDON, (R). — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies against the dollar at the close of interbank trading on the London foreign exchange market last night. Tourist rates will differ from those quoted below.

One dollar	U.S. dollars	West German marks
1.8762/60	2.0130/40	Dutch guilders
2.1480/95	1.8670/80	Swiss francs
31.34/37	4.5390/5410	Belgian francs
850.80/851.30	218.80/90	Italian lire
4.5575/85	218.80/90	Japanese yen
5.3010/20	4.5575/85	Swedish crowns
5.5475/90	5.3010/20	Norwegian crowns
	5.5475/90	Denish crowns

Stock prices closed lower Wednesday in thin trading, dealers said. At 15:00 the F.T. index was down 10.3 at 460.1. Uncertainty about money supply growth and the likelihood of higher short-term interest rates, plus concern about the inflationary effects of funding the public sector borrowing requirement forced in the budget, unsettled the market, dealers said. Government bonds ended up to 1-1/2 point lower, while industrial leaders fell as much as 13p.

Gold eased with the lower bullion fixing, U.S., Canadian and Australian stock were narrowly higher.

Price of gold closed in London Wednesday at \$180.00/oz.

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ARIES (Mar. 21 to Apr. 19) Plan some entertainment at home that can bring pleasure to family members. Avoid an opponent who is jealous of you.

TAURUS (Apr. 20 to May 20) Go over written material and eliminate any errors in them. Make business calls and then visit friends and relatives. Be happy.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 21) Allow time to put your business affairs in better order. Find new outlets that can be beneficial for you. Be more logical.

MOON CHILDREN (June 22 to July 21) Make a close study of yourself and see where you can improve your appearance. Relax at home tonight.

LEO (July 22 to Aug. 21) A good day to reconcile with an associate if you have had a misunderstanding. Find a better way to gain your personal aims.

VIRGO (Aug. 22 to Sept. 22) Try to contact friends you have not seen in a long time and something good will come of this. Take no chances with your health.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Don't neglect career duties at this time. Study financial status and find the right way to gain more security in the future.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You need to study all details of a new project you are working on to be achieve success. Be exact with facts and figures.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Don't wait any longer in handling an important responsibility. State your desires to mate and reach a better understanding.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 20) Try to cement better relations with an associate so that the future becomes more mutually satisfying. Ignore a bad mood.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 to Feb. 19) Organize your work schedule so you are more efficient and can accomplish more. Follow your hunches which are good now.

PISCES (Feb. 20 to Mar. 20) Doing something thoughtful for your mate will bring fine results now. Take modern treatments to improve your health.

USSR's Marxist economy suffers inflation in the midst of industrial inefficiency

By David Satter
The Financial Times
Moscow correspondent

MOSCOW (F.T.) — Halfway through a five year plan which excused its low growth targets by a purported emphasis on "efficiency and quality", the Soviet economy shows signs of running down, swamped in its own inefficiency.

The latest blow for Soviet planners came in the 1977 economic results which showed that the goal for Soviet national income had not been met. Agricultural production was sharply down and industry barely achieved targets which were the second lowest in 30 years.

The results were bad, and what's more, they are consistent with the steady downward drift in key Soviet national economic indices since the end of World War II.

At what must have been a singularly depressing meeting of the Soviet Council of Ministers preceding publication of the 1977 results, some of the blame for the minimal 3.5 per cent increase in national income (a measure comparable with gross national product) was laid to ministries which had failed to complete projects.

Individual enterprises were criticised for squandering workers' time, underutilising expensive machinery and over-consuming raw materials.

The target for National Income growth had been 4.1 per cent. The 1977 result was evidently so embarrassing that the Soviet authorities felt compelled to lump it together with the 5.0 per cent increase in national income achieved in 1976 and used the two-year total as evidence of the country's progress in the 1976-80 five year plan period.

In the early 1950s, national income, the best overall measure of Soviet economic growth, increased by as much as 12.3 per cent per year.

The most serious shortfall for the Soviets in 1977 was in agriculture, the economy's traditional Achilles' heel. Official figures indicate that agricultural production increased by 3.0 per cent this figure is based on a 1973 price base, which would tend to overstate the value of production.

Western agricultural experts believe that as a result of a disappointing 1977 grain harvest, which fell more than 17 m. tons below target, Soviet agricultural output actually decreased in 1977 by five per cent.

There was some consolation for Soviet planners in industrial production results exceeding expectations by small margins. But the targets were exceedingly modest and despite this, oil, coal and steel

The indicators used for judging the state of the economy are one reason for Soviet industrial inefficiency and waste. The resulting lack of finance for vital development projects means that the prices of consumer goods and services have to be inflated.

production were all below target.

Pressure to increase prices

The shortfalls in production have led to pressure to increase prices even though it has always been a point of ideological pride in the Soviet Union that only a planned economy can avoid Western-style inflation.

At the beginning of March, Mr. Nikolai Glushkov, chairman of the State Prices Committee, announced that the price of petrol would be doubled and the cost of coffee trebled. Petrol now sells for between 16 and 20 kopeks (21p and 26p) per litre and coffee beans for about 20 rubles (about £26) per kilo.

These price increases were not so startling in themselves, particularly in the case of coffee where the cost has risen sharply on world commodity markets; but they presage further price rises in a country where prices are supposed to be stable.

In January 1977, the Soviets broke with tradition and announced the first significant price rises. They doubled air fares, taxi fares, and fares for sea and river transport. The new petrol and coffee increases announced in March generated a wave of rumours that even more drastic price increases on staple products would be put into effect on April 1.

The rumours were so widespread that they had to be officially denied by the Soviet news agency Tass before they could -- for the time being -- be laid to rest.

With production stagnant and the very real possibility that the 1980 target for national income may not be achieved before 1981, the Soviet Union is going to be hard pressed to muster the resources necessary for expensive Siberian development without raising prices still further.

The development is essential if the USSR is to exploit its rich energy resources.

Subsidies

As matters stand, the Soviet government is spending vast quantities of money to subsidise the sale of products at stable retail prices. In 1976, the cost of subsidising milk and meat sales was 19 billion rubles (about £14 billion) and the cost of subsidising housing was five billion rubles (about £3.7 billion).

The web of state subsidies is one of the reasons for a rumour which alleged that meat prices were about to be doubled. This rumour struck people in Moscow as completely plausible, and it may yet be proved true.

Some of the underlying problems which have bedevilled the Soviet economy are discussed at the end of last year in a three part series in the Communist party newspaper Pravda by Dmitri Valovoi, an economist and the newspaper's deputy editor.

With industrial labour productivity increasing by only 4.1 per cent in 1977, compared to 10.1 per cent in 1951 despite a massive influx of Western technology, the question of improved efficiency has become critical. Mr. Valovoi said that the economy's concentration on gross output

and the absence of indicators able to measure other economic functions such as contracts filled or production per man hour, create endemic inefficiencies and lead to staggering waste.

In 1976, unfinished projects constituted 80 per cent of the capital invested and raw materials were regularly squandered because an enterprise's output is calculated in part on the basis of expended materials.

This encourages managers to use as much and as expensive material as possible making their products, even if this leads to breakdowns or bottlenecks further down the line.

Typically, shortages and slow deliveries hamper all aspects of the economy.

Mr. Yuri Brezhnev, a deputy foreign trade minister and the son of the Soviet president, confirms that transportation bottlenecks are interfering with foreign trade, and Soviet officials have stated that idle time in the construction industry frequently amounts to 20 per cent of the work time because of disruptions to supplies.

Soviet officials have pledged to make the economy more efficient, but so far they have given little indication of how this is to be achieved.

-- Financial Times News-Features

Malta mounts last ditch effort to ensure viable economic future after Britain leaves

By Godfrey Grima
The Financial Times
correspondent in Malta

VALETTA (F.T.) — With the permanent closure of British military bases due to be completed in not more than fifteen months, Malta's socialist government, led by Premier Dom Mintoff, is mounting a last ditch effort to ensure that the island's future proves no less economically viable than politically stable.

Signs of this effort meeting success are not overtly encouraging and despite its prodigious growth since 1971 Malta's economy appears little able to overcome the loss of an annual 28 million Maltese pounds currently earned from

Britain's military presence.

This is not to belittle the considerable progress which is still being achieved against great odds. Presenting this year's £M109 m. budget in parliament Mr. Mintoff's Finance Minister Dr. Joe Abela recently announced that the economy had grown by another nine per cent. Despite criticism levelled at the government on its handling of the economy, the limited incentives offered to attract foreign investments, and the gradual slide into socialism, the government insists that Malta has fared much better than most countries in Western Europe.

From £M189.5 m. in 1976 Malta's total production grew

In 1979 Malta will have to stand alone, without the help, afforded by the U.K. military presence. In practice this will mean reliance on cash aid from other nations; but there is little assurance that this will be forthcoming.

in 1977 to £M217.3 m. Manufacturing firms produced £M168.8 m. worth of goods ranging from toys to heavy duty switchgear. This showed a £M30 m. increase over the previous year's figure. The value of the resultant exports rose to £M101.8 m. the greater part of which was purchased by Common Market countries led by Germany.

The drydocks, with a work force of more than 5,000 people and with its fortunes on

the upgrade, are now making a profit rather than losing money. Ship repair and shipbuilding sales grew to more than £M15 m.

Dedicated to, if not obsessed with the creation of an even wider range of dockyard services, Mr. Mintoff has ordered the building of a new yard at Marsa to build tankers. At the same time a jump-sized drydock is being built by the Chinese for the servicing of 300,000 ton tank-

ers. In an effort to revive Malta's image as a maritime centre a £M48 m. trans-shipment harbour is being constructed, again with international help, on the island's south coast at Marsaxlokk.

Other sectors too were booming. Malta's burgeoning tourist industry, for example, is netting the economy an annual £M34.5 m. This year some 400,000 holidaymakers, compared with 211,000 five years ago, are expected to visit the island.

But what Malta's healthy balance of payments really depicts is the momentum by which the economy is cruising ahead. Last year a £M19.3 m. surplus was recorded on current account. Foreign currency reserves rocketed to an all time high of £M318 m.

Social conditions too have been improved. Between 1974 and the end of last year, the minimum wage rose from £M10 to almost £M16 a week. End of year bonuses given by both the public and private sector increased from £M3 in 1973 to £M60 in 1977. On the other hand the cost of living according to government figures, went up by a relatively low rate at 10 per cent.

Yet all this remains inadequate when compared to the island's overall requirements after the British leave in 1979.

The initiative, launched in 1972, to create a self reliant economy which can safely sail ahead after an annual income of £M28 from Britain disappears, has failed. Proof of this lies not only in the government's own statistics, which show investments to be running the risk of stagnating after 1979, but also in Mr. Mintoff's ongoing cash-aid talks with France, Italy, Libya and Algeria.

Even more disconcerting are the indications that the economy is contracting rather than expanding. The island's gross domestic product last year grew by only nine per cent, which represents a decline of eight per cent over the 1976 figure.

Gross capital formation,

which in 1976 grew by 28.5 per cent, last year increased by 27.6 per cent. Investments are of crucial importance to Malta whose only chance of safely crossing the threshold to a viable economic and stable political future rests with the number of jobs which can be created.

1977 exports though climbing to a record £M121.8 m. were in fact up by only 25 per cent compared with a 50 per cent increase in 1976.

The decline was reflected in the overall performance of the economy. In 1976 Malta showed a current account surplus of £M26.6 m. in 1977 this dropped to £M19.3 m. Official reserves too felt the impact. In 1977 reserves went up by £M57.9 m. but last year by only £M31.8 m. a drop of 14 per cent.

Salary movements too were not financed by the government alone; gains made by some sections of the population were often at the expense of others.

Salary movements within the public sector offer a good example. Seven years ago, when Labour came into power, the ratio between the lower and higher grades was one to seven; by last year this had dropped to one to three.

A prominent civil service trade union leader argues: "This situation has caused inefficiency within the public sector to drop drastically." In brief, success and failure have been chasing each other round Malta's seven years of development plan without the island gaining enough strength to soften the impact of Britain's coming military withdrawal.

"Government has now arrived at the problem everyone envisaged a long time ago. One hopes now that Libya, Algeria, France and Italy will agree to provide the funds. But at this stage there are little more than pious hopes," a leading economist somewhat woefully points out.

-- Financial Times News-Features

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THE BETTER HALF By Barnes
"I have an energy crunch right here."

Italian police rescue 2 hostages in 6 hours

ROME, April 12 (R). — Italian police scored a major success in their war against rampant kidnapping when they rescued two hostages within six hours here yesterday. First they stormed a hideout and freed 16-year-old Michela Marconi, daughter of a wealth industrialist. Then last night they intercepted three men transferring abducted millionaire builder Angelo Apolloni from one hideout to another.

The kidnappers escaped after a gun battle and a car chase. Signor Apolloni, 32, who was lying handcuffed in the boot of the car, was shot in the shoulder.

His captors had also sliced off one of his fingertips when they sent a ransom demand to his family.

Police believe both kidnap victims were held by the same gang. They had been abducted last month.

"I can't believe it, I can't believe it, I am free," said Signor Apolloni, embracing police.

The police got the vital breakthrough when they laid an ambush on Monday night and

caught two men minutes after they picked up a 270 million lire (\$317,000) ransom for the girl.

The two men were shot and wounded and are now recovering in hospital.

Fourteen people have been kidnapped in Italy this year and nine are still missing. They include ex-Premier Aldo Moro, seized by far-left Red Brigades

guerrillas last month.

The Moro abduction -- which was politically motivated -- put a temporary stop to common criminal kidnappings. A massive hunt for the 61-year-old ex-premier apparently scared off the criminals.

Last year kidnap gangs abducted 75 people, netting an estimated \$30 million dollars in ransom money.

Vance embarks on overseas mission

WASHINGTON, April 12 (R). — Secretary of State Cyrus Vance leaves tonight on an arduous overseas mission aimed at breaking deadlock on two major world problems, Rhodesia and U.S.-Soviet nuclear arms talks.

A breakthrough on Rhodesia could result in an all-party conference, while significant progress on nuclear arms would point to a summit meeting between President Carter and President Brezhnev.

His trip abroad will take him to Tanzania, Rhodesia, Britain and the Soviet Union and could last two weeks.

In Dar Es Salaam, Mr. Vance will team up with British Foreign Secretary David Owen for talks there on Saturday and Sunday with the leaders of the Rhodesian Patriotic Front, Guerrilla movement.

Then Mr. Vance and Dr. Owen fly to Salisbury for discussions with black and white leaders of the interim government set up in last month's internal settlement, which the guerrillas oppose.

Mr. Vance and Dr. Owen are due to attend a Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO) Ministerial Council session in London on Tuesday and Wednesday.

After the CENTO conference, Mr. Vance flies to Moscow for critical talks on curbing strategic nuclear arms. U.S. officials said they expected Mr. Vance would carry new proposals to Moscow.

Significant progress would point to another meeting soon between the secretary of state and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, probably during the U.N. Special Conference on Disarmament in mid-May, followed by a Carter-Brezhnev summit.

U.S. moves to restrict lorry sales to Libya

WASHINGTON, April 12 (Agencies). — The U.S. State Department said it had recommended restricting the sale of heavy lorries to the Libyan Jamahiriyah because they "could be used in attempts to overthrow neighbouring governments friendly to the United States."

Spokesman Tom Reston said yesterday the recommendation was directed at the U.S. Commerce Department, which has approved the sale of the heavy tractor-trucks to Libya.

He said the department also urged restrictions on the sale of equipment which might have significant military use to other countries, but declined to name them.

Mr. Reston cited Libyan "support for international terrorists and recent efforts to undermine the governments of neighbouring countries which are friendly to the United States."

"Our information is that the end use of these heavy off-road truck-tractors is the Libyan army, and that they are for the purpose of transporting Libya's large inventory of Soviet-built tanks," he said.

The recommendation was that the Commerce Department place heavy equipment such as the trucks on a list of goods that had to be specifically licensed.

Earlier this year, the Carter administration decided not to sell Libya eight C-130 military transport planes and cancelled export licences for two Boeing 727 passenger planes.

At the time the department cited only the Libyan government's "continued support for international terrorism."

Mr. Max Grebe, attorney for the Oshkosh Truck Co. of Wisconsin, which is building the lorries, said yesterday the sale was in compliance with regulations. The firm is scheduled to deliver the first of the 400 lorries it sold for \$56 million, on April 22.

Company officials declined comment on the possible losses. A published report said the firm could be stuck with \$8 to \$10 million in contractual obligations to a Swiss middleman if the sale does not go through.

Bhutto's lawyer seeks more time

LAHORE, Pakistan, April 12 (R). — A defence lawyer for former Premier Zulfikar Ali Bhutto said yesterday he had applied to the Supreme Court for more time to prepare his client's appeal against his death sentence.

Mr. Yahya Bakhtiar, a former Attorney General, also complained of harassment and said it was being made impossible for him to obtain instructions.

The Supreme Court will consider on Saturday a defence application to delay the appeal hearing from its scheduled start on May 6.

Mr. Bakhtiar told Reuters the amount of evidence taken by the Lahore High Court in Mr. Bhutto's trial for ordering a political assassination ran to 2,400 pages.

When the Supreme Court 10 days ago set the date for the appeal it was told the evidence to be studied ran to 1,400 pages.

Mr. Bhutto's lawyer also complained that the defence had not been supplied with many of the trial documents.

"We have, however, been supplied with the statement Mr. Bhutto made when the High Court trial went into camera hut with instructions from the Supreme Court that it must not be published either in Pakistan or abroad," Mr. Bakhtiar said.

He said he slept last night in his car after he was refused entry into the house that he and his wife shared with the ex-premier's wife, Mrs. Nusrat Bhutto.

Mrs. Bhutto is under house arrest and Mr. Bakhtiar was told he would be allowed into house for three hours a day.

World News Briefs

NATO meeting is driven off Danish campus

AALBORG, Denmark, April 12 (R). — Students demonstrating against Danish military spending drove a NATO conference from their campus in Aalborg last night. Organisers of the two-day-old meeting of the NATO Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development said they were switching the venue rather than risk clashes with about 200 students who blocked conference entrances. Students said their grants were being cut while the government spent huge sums on defence, including buying American F-16 fighter planes. Bigger demonstrations are expected at Frederikshavn, north of Aalborg, on April 18-19 when the NATO Nuclear Planning Group is due to meet.

Leading journalist arrested in Indonesia

JAKARTA, April 12 (R). — The Indonesian government has arrested Mr. Mahbub Djumaidi, Deputy Secretary General of the Muslim United Party (MPP), sources close to his family said here today. The sources said that Mr. Djumaidi, a leading newspaper columnist and former chairman of the Indonesian Journalists Association, was taken from his home in Bandung, West Java, by security officers yesterday. The order of arrest, made by Attorney General Ali Said, gave no reason or charges for the arrest of the journalist who had been writing articles in a number of Jakarta papers about the political and economic situation of the country.

Zanzibar closed due to cholera outbreak

DAR ES SALAAM, April 12 (R). — The island of Zanzibar was sealed off from the outside world today after cholera claimed 10 lives, there, officials said. No one was allowed to enter or leave the Indian Ocean island, and all schools, hotels and restaurants were closed. Flights from the mainland of Tanzania were suspended. Officials on Zanzibar, (population 650,000) said 100 cases of cholera had been diagnosed and 80 people were now in hospital.

Sikh pilgrims gather for Bisakhi festival

LHASANABDAL, Pakistan, April 12 (R). — Over 14,000 Sikh pilgrims from Pakistan, India, Britain, Iran, Kenya, and Afghanistan gathered here yesterday at the start of the four-day Bisakhi festival in honour of their founder, Baba Guru Nanak. The Minister for the Indian State of Punjab, Sardar Randhir Singh Cheema, led the Indian party of 1,500, the largest group from outside Pakistan.

Powerful earthquake shakes Kodiak Island

PALMER, Alaska, April 12 (AP). — A powerful earthquake, with a magnitude of 6.3 on the Richter scale, hit the southeast coast of Kodiak Island this evening, but no injuries or damage were reported. A spokesman at the Tsunami Warning Centre said the quake was not strong enough to create a tidal wave.

Rebels killed 20 in abortive coup says Somali president

MOGADISHU, April 12 (R). — Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre said 20 people were killed and 34 others wounded by rebels who staged last Sunday's abortive coup.

The president, speaking on Mogadishu Radio last night, said a number of military vehicles and weapons were also destroyed in the short-lived attempt to overthrow his socialist military government.

It was not specified whether the casualties were civilians or soldiers.

He gave no specific details about who was behind the rebellion, which was crushed within about two hours after shooting at a barracks and a road-block to the west of Mogadishu.

But he said the objective of the dissident officers and soldiers "in this critical stage through which the country is passing was to hand over the country to colonialism and blow the nation's stability sky-high."

Diplomatic sources here said there has been simmering discontent within Somali army units which were withdrawn from the Ogaden War in the face of overwhelming military and international political pressure last month.

The failure of the coup attempt was thought to have strengthened the Somali leader's position by showing that the majority of the army, at least in units around Mogadishu, still enjoys the support of the majority of the army, at least in units around Mogadishu.

He said in his broadcast last night: "Just as this plot has failed, other plots in the future are bound to fail."

He said the army caught most of the plotters, but a few escaped and were being hunted.

Vice President and Defence Minister Mohammad Ali Samatar, also speaking on Radio Mogadishu, denied reports of low morale in the army following the Ogaden War.

President Barre will visit China on Friday the New China News Agency (NCNA) announced tonight.

Car bomb injures 20 in Ankara

ANKARA, April 12 (R). — At least 20 people, most of them students, were injured when a car bomb exploded in Ankara today, police said.

Six of the injured were reported in serious condition.

The bomb exploded near the Academy of Engineering and Architecture, where leftist students gather every morning to enter school under police escort.

In two other bomb attacks on leftist students at the same school in the last four months five people have been killed.

At least 120 people have died in political violence in Turkey this year.

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HEWIG
SOGOE
PARMEE
THROCC

WHAT THEY SAID WHEN THEY MEASURED THE BABY MONSTER.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: "OOOOOOOO!" (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BIRCH CHUTE CHARGE FIGURE
Answer: "You wouldn't expect to be left in this position when you're this—" RIGHT"

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- Courage
- "Ullalume"
- Mischiefous
- Athwart
- Bird of prey
- Interview
- Proved
- Pervasive
- Spongewood
- Abstract
- Flexible
- Occupied
- Carrage
- Cabinet wood

DOWN

- River to the Baltic
- Send forth shoots
- Sainte: abbr.
- The number ten
- Tiger eye
- Angered
- Way
- Vague
- Pipe fitting
- Compass point
- Missile shelter
- Dawn goddess
- Gypsy gentleman
- Yoke
- Crab plover
- Footlike part
- Leftovers
- Landed properties
- A Tracy
- Sustained
- Zola character
- Disappointed
- Small taste
- Chapeau
- Make larger
- Mortar trough
- Grape or lime
- Concludes
- Druggist
- Exquisite
- Semester
- Stop
- Dank
- Contradict
- Unicorn fish
- Tissue
- Esau
- Indian
- New comb form
- Female ruff

Par time 25 minutes AP News/Features 4/6

Chad minister is wounded in grenade attack

N'DJAMENA, Chad, April 12 (R). — Chad's Minister of Justice, Lieutenant Mahmoud Abderraman, was wounded in the face in a grenade attack at his home last night.

There were conflicting reports on the seriousness of his injury.

First reports today said he was badly wounded. But officials said later that he was only slightly wounded and there was no cause for alarm.

Lieutenant Abderraman, a member of Chad's Supreme Military Council was with friends on the terrace of his house when the grenade was thrown by unidentified assailants.

Violent solar flare reported

BOULDER, Colorado, April 12 (AP). — The most violent solar flare in nearly four years could cause radio signal blackouts, telephone circuit outages and displays of the Northern Lights in the world's northern latitudes later this week, the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said.

The flare was detected Tuesday by NOAA satellites orbiting 22,300 miles above the earth, the agency said.

Carl Posey, a spokesman for NOAA's Environmental Research Laboratory here, said the flare will produce a storm in the earth's magnetic field, resulting in radio signals being

absorbed rather than reflected, beginning Thursday.

He predicted widespread telephone circuit outages and said Aurora Borealis displays -- the Northern Lights -- would be visible south of an east-west line that would pass through Chicago.

Sun spot and solar flare activity generally follows an 11-year cycle. The last cycle ended in 1976, preceded by a gradual decline of activity. That activity is increasing again, but NOAA researchers said there was no way of determining how active the surface of the sun may be over the next few years.

Indians gnash their teeth as Desai determines to press for a liquor-free country

By K. K. Sharma

NEW DELHI (F.T.). — As the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai's prohibitionist fervour pushes the country towards his dream of a liquor-free India, others concerned with tourism, law and order, revenues and employment are silently gnashing their teeth.

Mr. Desai plans to introduce total prohibition within four years and the phased programme begins on April 1. This will result in at least 158 "dry" days in New Delhi this year, declaration of "dry" districts in some states, lowering of the alcohol content in beer -- and the police fear an upsurge in crime because of the bootlegging that will inevitably follow.

Sacrifice tourism?

So far, it is not clear how much foreigners will be affected, although no club in New Delhi will be allowed to sell alcoholic drinks so at least there they will share the lot of the Indians who cannot get a drink in a bar. Mr. Desai has said that he would rather do without tourism than be told to provide liquor for foreign tourists but whether he will press his fate to this extent remains uncertain.

Promoters of tourism, both in the government and in the trade, are worried that a "dry" India may seem less inviting to foreign visitors. As it is, India's share in total world tourist traffic was a minute 0.22 per cent in 1977.

Past experiments with prohibition in Bombay and Madras have demonstrated that the average foreign tourist would rather make a quick getaway from these towns than go through the harassment of getting a permit to buy his drink. Says a worried group tourist promoter: "If a

India's leader, Morarji Desai, is determined to get rid of liquor in India from the beginning of April. The withdrawal symptoms are likely to be painful.

tourist is told he cannot drink or can drink only within the four walls of his room -- and even that not on all days -- and that he cannot entertain his Indian friends, then he will say to hell with the lights and sounds of India and go elsewhere."

Zealous prohibitionists even tried to have the country's international airline, Air India, declared dry but the company has so far successfully resisted this. Air India executives told the government bluntly that in a highly competitive industry like international airlines, "dry" flights could mean empty flights.

Many tourist-attracting states have also told the Indian government that they are unwilling to toe the official line. In the case of Kashmir, for instance, even partial prohibition could seriously damage the state's economy which is almost entirely dependent on tourism. The southern state of Karnataka -- just won by Mrs. Indira Gandhi's Congress faction -- has also decided to defy Mr. Desai.

Make up losses

Apart from tourism, excise duties on liquor yield five billion rupees a year. Mr. Desai says he is willing to make up the losses that state governments will face through prohibition -- despite the lack of resources for developmental projects, which are bound to suffer as a result.

An estimated 150,000 people are engaged in the alcohol business in India -- pro-

duction, distribution, club bars, liquor shops and the like. They stand to lose their jobs at a time when the government is committed to eliminating unemployment within 10 years. India has 80 functioning distilleries and breweries while another 61 are being built and have not yet been commissioned. Since export sales are limited their future now becomes uncertain.

With the average investment in a brewery or distillery being more than 10 million rupees, total prohibition would mean writing off about 800 million rupees while another one billion rupees would be accounted for by existing units. There is some talk of diverting production to industrial alcohol but the needs for this are limited within the country.

Many state governments own shares in distilleries and breweries which are scattered all over the country. Of the 13 states with breweries and distilleries, northern Uttar Pradesh has the largest number -- 21 -- and even a "dry" state like Tamil Nadu in the south has five.

Protagonists of prohibition argue that a four-year phased programme is to be launched and hence all problems that arise can be dealt with as they arise. But they ignore the fact that even in New Delhi, which already has partial prohibition, every "dry" day is marked by a number of deaths caused by the consumption of illegally-distilled liquor. The local police confirm this, pointing out that

poorer people are forced by "dry" days to look for cheap drink that often kills.

Upward swing in crime

This aspect of the problem is causing concern both to social workers and police. The police say privately that tighter "dry" laws from April 1 will result in an upward swing in crime figures.

They cite cases of liquor poisoning in the existing "dry" states of Tamil Nadu and Gujarat and compare these figures with the comparatively lower ones in "wet" states like Kashmir and West Bengal to point out that prohibition does not mean an end to drinking.

The All-India Prohibition Council feels otherwise and its secretary, Mr. Roop Narain, expressed "satisfaction" of the Janata Government's "performance" on prohibition (Mr. Desai heads both the council and the government).

His satisfaction arises from the declaration by Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan states of certain districts as wholly "dry" and the commitment of others, including the northeastern states of Meghalaya and Nagaland, to increase the number of "dry" days each week.

Yet Mr. Desai faces the problem of an unevenly-implemented policy since many of the non-Janata states (like the Marxist-ruled state of West Bengal) have declared unambiguously that prohibition is not for them. There are many of other "directive principles" in the constitution, like the right to work and education, that should be given priority rather than launching moralistic programmes that will create additional problems, they say.

Financial Times News-Features

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